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"Marriage was recognized just as much as all other degrees of relationship, for all of which they [the Yamana] have their specific terms."

about by the dominance of European civilization has strangled this judicious tribal custom, along with much that was original. The Indians of today regret that some of their countrymen enter a marriage without the ceremony of former times. Mary, who was indignant over the widespread lack of form, very much lamented these conditions: "A woman, after all, is not an object, not a piece of wood or something, that one takes without ceremony. A girl who gives herself to a man without the formalities customary among us is not a real woman. It was so nice in former times when the painted bride was given to the bridegroom, who was also painted. Everybody was very happy on those occasions!" Again it is European influence that has killed the feeling for their native tribal customs among the younger generation. I learned the bulk of what is contained in the preceding pages from reliable old Alfredo on my second journey.

/658/ 9. Parents-In-Law and Children-In-Law

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● 606 In the days before and after the wedding, the bridegroom is very obliging and anxious to serve his parents-in-law. There is no legal obligation for service in the form of work or for gifts, but it is a matter of concern to him to obtain the favor of the girl's parents in order that they will surely and without reservation give their consent to the planned marriage. It is well known that a certain shyness prevents the lovers from revealing their turbulent desires. One day shortly before the wedding, when the love of the two young people has already become known, the bridegroom, in order to gain admittance into the hut of the girl's parents, places a rather large bundle of wood in front of the hut and waits until he is called in (40). If this happens, he interprets it as the surest

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40. It is well known that among the Selk'nam, also, the young chap who is anxious to marry resorts to silent, patient waiting in front of the

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hut of his beloved, until her father admits him and thereby announces his approval of the marriage (Vol. I, 327).

guarantee of the old people's approval of his marriage plan. He conceals his innermost joy and henceforth conducts himself as ancient tribal custom demands of a son-in-law. Free, open intercourse is not permitted him nor the daughter-in-law with their parents-in-law. On the other hand, they are obliged to render service to the latter. What the son-in-law does for them immediately before and after the wedding should probably more accurately be called appreciation and a show of gratitude for the willingness of these parents to hand over their daughter to him. In order to demonstrate clearly his readiness to please his father-in-law, the lover finds out what he lacks or expects or particularly desires, and that is what he procures, whether it be a canoe, a harpoon, or a beautiful fur cloak. Beyond that, he brings many other trifles to his father-in-law's hut until the marriage celebration begins. At the same time the bride, if possible, renders small services to her future mother-in-law, but these are not expected or taken for granted as in the case of the bridegroom. That she, too, favors her parents-in-law with gifts clearly indicates, however, that the presents delivered by the bridegroom cannot be regarded as bride purchase (p. 404).

606 The limitations of intercourse between children-in-law and their parents-in-law constitute a definite custom of avoidance. It is regarded as inadmissible and improper to address the parents-in-law or to interrupt their conversation with incidental remarks. When one meets them or enters their hut, one may not greet them; if one happens to run into them, one should, with downcast eyes, give them a wide berth. It is the general custom that one does not sit down opposite them, never looks them in the eye, and never sits next to them. If it happens that a son-in-law or daughter-in-law is in the same hut with the parents-in-law, the former must move far away and /659/ turn from them, that is to say, turn to one side or turn their backs. If several men gather together, the son-in-law chooses his place in this circle so that it is farthest removed from his father-in-law. He remains silent

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● 66 and crouches low when his father-in-law speaks. These precepts are observed to this day. One day when we were talking to a few old men about the men's celebration, kina, Calderon, who was otherwise very forward and loquacious, acted so silent and reserved that his conduct could not fail to be conspicuous. When he was questioned about it, he explained that his father-in-law, William, was present and was talking, and that under these circumstances it was proper for him, as the son-in-law, to maintain a respectful silence.

The daughter-in-law is obliged to maintain the same shy reserve toward her mother-in-law. This restriction, however, is somewhat relaxed after the first year of marriage. In any case a free exchange or frank discussion never comes about.

Nevertheless, the son-in-law and daughter-in-law have several unavoidable obligations toward their parents-in-law (41). In

41. Bridges (a): 301 referred to this with imprecise data: "Men work for their wives' parents both before and after marriage, until the bears her firstborn, when the husband is exempted from further duty, save occasional gifts of fish, blubber, canoe, spear, etc., and a willingness to help his father-in-law in difficulties" /cited in English/. What Krickeberg: 321 has to say about this should be corrected on the basis of the above explanations.

sickness, especially, or if the parents-in-law are incapacitated, they must be helpful and show concern about the former's sustenance. The children are not required to take them into their hut, because this would awkwardly constrain them. Nevertheless, an old woman sometimes lives temporarily with her married daughter and takes part in the daily canoe trips. In any case, the son-in-law or daughter-in-law must at certain intervals see how their parents-in-law are doing, must provide them with fresh food or good tools, and perhaps find other persons to care for them, all depending on the requirements of the individual case. The parents-in-law must not be denied specific wishes or refused particular requests.

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606 In spite of these prohibitions, and precisely because of the prevailing obligations, the two parties must associate in an indirect and roundabout way. For about a year after her marriage, the daughter-in-law may exchange a few necessary words with her mother-in-law; the son-in-law for the rest of his life refrains from any direct conversation with his father-in-law. We have just spoken of this. It is the daughter who intercedes for her husband with her father, or the son who does so with his parents for his wife. The corresponding brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law also serve as mediators.

In a concrete situation, social intercourse runs as follows.

/660/ When the son-in-law becomes aware that his father-in-law is approaching him and his family, he sends his wife out to meet him and has her say: "My husband sends me, he invites you into our hut!" Pleased over this, her own father replies: "Thank you very much, but I was about to build my own hut!" He decides to do this in order not to embarrass his son-in-law, for the latter would have to remain silent, sit apart at meals, and humble himself constantly, which would spoil the visit for him. Hence, in order to save him any embarrassment and unpleasantness, the father-in-law builds his own hut nearby, and he is assisted by his daughter. When the building is nearly finished, she returns to her own hut and addresses her husband in a voice that all can hear: "I invited your father-in-law to stay with us, but he prefers to live in a hut of his own. He thanks you!" Then her husband speaks in a loud voice so that the father-in-law can hear it: "I am very sorry that my father-in-law is not coming to my hut!" In this delicate way he expresses the fact that he is glad to be at the disposal of his father-in-law. While the latter is in the vicinity, his own daughter visits him repeatedly; the son-in-law himself appears in the father-in-law's hut only once or twice and inquires about the possible needs of his father-in-law from his own wife.

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606 As a substitute for direct conversation, which is not permitted, they manage in their own way. As soon as it is quiet outside, the son-in-law, in a loud voice and without addressing anyone, tells what he has recently experienced, observed, and learned, especially things which are worth knowing for his parents-in-law. The latter hear each word and are kept up-to-date.

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521 On the other hand, the father-in-law, squatting before his
606 hut fire, talks as though to himself, but so that it can be heard
all around, saying what he wants his son-in-law to know. He
also gives actual instructions to him in this manner or in similar
roundabout ways. For example, if his son-in-law enters his hut,
he neither greets him, looks up, nor says a word, but silently
stays in some dark corner. If they are both alone and no one can
mediate between them, the old man expresses his wishes, not by
direct address, but as though he were talking to himself: "I left
my knife lying on the beach!" Or he says: "Outside on the tree
branch there hangs a penguin that I should like to roast, I'm
hungry!" Or he might say: "I killed a sea lion this morning. It
is a large animal. I am an old man, and I could not drag it to
the canoe; I left it lying out there on the rock." Or, finally:
"The wood for my hut fire is almost used up; if only someone
would provide me with fresh firewood!" The son-in-law under-
stands such statements; they are requests of his father-in-law,
which he carries out without objection.

606 /661/ Such strange reserve on the part of the son-in-law and
daughter-in-law and their association with their parents-in-law
in the oddly indirect way through their respective children or
through a brother-in-law or sister-in-law are expressions of veneration
and respect for the old people. They say: "The parents-in-
law are worthy of veneration, therefore children-in-law may not
conduct themselves conspicuously in their presence nor exchange a
word with them (42)!" The parents-in-law are held in the same

42. "Sons-in-law and daughters-in-law treat
with considerable deference their fathers and
mothers-in-law" /cited in English/, according
to Bridges (a):202.

esteem as own parents; the fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law of
a married couple regard each other as brothers and sisters. Hence
the children-in-law fulfill all the duties that they owe their own
parents. They give them presents very often and do all kinds of
work for them: they bring wood for the hut fire, grass for the
sleeping place, drinking water and food, rushes for braiding baskets,

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606 and lances for lance-shafts. In short, they help their parents-in-law in every way and outwardly show them far more veneration than their own parents. A son-in-law would neither demand anything of them nor borrow anything. More than that, the son-in-law and daughter-in-law must also display a certain reserve toward the brothers and sisters of their parents-in-law, although it is not inadmissible to exchange brief words with them occasionally. Every man, however, can associate freely with the grandparents of his wife (43).

43. In the relationship between parents-in-law and children-in-law there are remarkable similarities between the Yamana and the neighboring Selk'nam (Vol. I, 332) and the Halakwulup (Vol. III).

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182 European civilization, disrupting everything, has done away with many regulations formerly respected by the Yamana as sacred laws. For this reason, disgraceful disorders have met no opposition among the remaining survivors of the tribe. Older Indians whose principles are the same as those of their ancestors and who are helpless to stop this confusion complain bitterly and deeply regret the uncontrollable decline of their entire nation.

b. Married Life

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593 With the marriage ceremony, independent life begins for the newly wedded couple. They are no longer dependent upon their own parents, and as a newly established conjugal union, they find themselves standing on their own feet. There is no definite rule about the time when the newlyweds break away from their parents. It depends on the position of the family of the bridegroom or of the bride. In exceptional cases, the young people remain with their elders until they have their first child.

The young man does not find it difficult to turn his back on the parental hut; he has long felt the urge for personal /662/ independence and the desire for the unimpeded development of

591 after which they would usually go for good to the groom's kin. Thus, localized groups of kin tended to be paternal.

609 After marriage the husband's paternal uncle and the wife's maternal aunt took particular interest in them, superseding in large measure their respective parents. Children-in-law were expected to

606 look after their parents-in-law in sickness or other needs. Children-in-law observed a number of avoidances regarding their parents-in-law: greeting their parents-in-law, speaking to them or breaking in on their conversation with remarks, looking at them, and sitting down beside them were all taboo. When in the same hut with their parents-in-law, they turned their sides or backs on them. A year or so after marriage, the restrictions between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were partly, but never wholly, relaxed; those between son-in-law and father-in-law lasted through life. On visits of the father-in-law to his daughter, he and his son-in-law communicated wishes and news through the daughter and wife or by indirect discourse.

568 The man was, in theory, considered the head of the family, with
593 authority to rule. Actually, his authority was very far from absolute, and the woman was largely her own mistress, particularly in such provinces of her own as child rearing, food gathering, and canoe managing. Some men dominated over their wives, but not a few husbands were under the thumb of their spouses. Some husbands were cruel, but if so they ran afraid of the wife's kin. More generally, woman's position both in the family and in the community seemed a respected one, not that of a drudge, slave, or inferior being, and she enjoyed a fairly high degree of freedom and independence.

684 Adultery was disapproved by the Yaghan code, but apparently
831 the code suffered appreciable infringement in practice. Adultery on the wife's part was, if discovered, punished by the husband with sound beatings, very rarely with death. Public opinion disapproved of her behavior. Adultery on the husband's part also gave rise to domestic battles in which the husband sometimes suffered severe treatment at his offended wife's hands. Jealousy on the part of both husband and wife was common. Wife lending was absent. There was no professional prostitution; a woman, married or unmarried, of markedly loose character was looked down upon.

586 Separation and divorce were fairly frequent, but were not lightly resorted to. The most common cause appears to have been cruel treatment of the wife by the husband, though there were other causes such as marked laziness, negligence, or crabbedness on the part of the wife. In case the wife became incapacitated through illness or age, the man could, and, it seems, more commonly did, take to himself a

199 Second Wife;